

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00639 122125Z

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8922

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0639

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TD, RQ, CU, US

SUBJECT: WILLIAMS RECEPTION OF VISITING PUERTO RICAN TEAM

1. AS WE ARE REPORTING SEPARATELY, THE PUERTO RICAN VISIT HERE SEEMS TO HAVE GONE QUITE SUCCESSFULLY. THE PUERTO RICANS FOUND SOME AREAS OF ECONOMIC AND TRADE COOPERATION WHICH THEY WISH TO EXPLORE IN MORE DEPTH, AND THE GOTT HAS AGREED TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM AT A LATER DATE IN SAN JUAN.

2. SOME OF THE ATMOSPHERICS WERE QUITE INTERESTING AND I WANTED TO PASS THEM ON TO YOU. FIRST, THE GOTT PULLED OUT ALL THE HOSPITALITY STOPS. WILLIAMS' TOP MINISTER (ERROL MAHIBIR, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, AND PETROLEUM AND MINES) DEVOTED AN ENTIRE DAY TO THE TALKS, AND FOREIGN MINISTER JOSEPH RECEIVED ALBORS FOR ALONG CHAT YESTERDAY. JOSEPH ALSO ATTENDED A DINNER I GAVE LAST NIGHT. IN SHORT, THE CONTACT WITH THE PUERTO RICANS OBVIOUSLY HAD A HIGH PRIORITY IN TOP GOTT CIRCLES.

3. MOST NOTEWORTHY, HOWEVER, WAS A SUMMONS FOR THE GROUP TO PAY A CALL ON ERIC WILLIAMS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AT
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PAGE 02 PORT O 00639 122125Z

WILLIAMS' HOME. WE FOUND THE PM IN A RELAZED AND

EXPANSIVE FRAME OF MIND. HE AND ALBORS HIT IT OFF FROM THE START AND THE COURTESY CALL DEVELOPED INTO A TWO HOUR BULL SESSION.

4. WILLIAMS PULLED NO PUNCHES ABOUT HIS CURRENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS CASTRO. HE FEELS THAT HE FOUGHT THE GOOD BATTLE TO GET CUBA BACK INTO RESPECTABILITY IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION AND WAS REWARDED FOR HIS EFFORTS BY CASTRO SABOTAGING HIM ON HIS CARIBBEAN LAW OF THE SEA STRATEGY. WILLIAMS' ATTITUDE CAN BEST BE SUMMED UP BY HIS OWN WORDS: "IF CASTRO THINKS HE CAN DICTATE TO ME ON IMPORTANT REGIONAL MATTERS, HE CAN GO STRAIGHT TO HELL" HE RELISHED THIS STATEMENT TO THE POINT OF REPEATING IT SEVERAL TIMES FOR EMPHASIS.

5. AS FAR AS PUERTO RICO IS CONCERNED, WILLIAMS MADE THE POINT THAT THE COMMONWEALTH TEN YEARS OR SO AGO WAS PLAYING AN ACTIVE AND VERY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN A VARIETY OF CARIBBEAN REGIONAL EFFORTS. HE LAMENTED THAT IN THE INTERVENING YEARS THE COMMONWEALTH SEEMED TO HAVE OPTED OUT. HE ALSO REPEATED INSOME DETAIL WHAT HE TOLD BOB RICH EARLIER ABOUT OPPOSITION WITHIN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN TO THE IDEA OF CDB MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT SOME SORT OF AFFILIATION WITH SELECTED CARICOM ACTIVITIES. IN SHORT, IT IS PRETTY CLEAR TO ME THAT: A) IF THE COMMONWEALTH DESIRES TO PURSUE CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE REGION; AND B) IF THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT DAMAGE TO THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND PREROGATIVES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THEN SO MUCH THE BETTER FOR OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP.

6. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALBORS OR GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ-COLON WILL PROBABLY BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU NEXT WEEK TO FILL YOU IN ON THE TALKS. I HOPE YOU PASS ON TO THEM THAT I MUCH ENJOYED THE CONTACT WITH ALBORS AND HIS PEOPLE AND THAT I THINK THEY MADE AN EXCELLENT IMPRESSION HERE IN PORT OF SPAIN.
FAY

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